

## MATERIALS & ACTIVITIES

### Chapter 1: Increasing Awareness about Students Experiencing Homelessness



# All Children Have Basic Needs

“Schools can’t ignore POVERTY....  
If basic needs are not met, learning  
cannot take place, no matter how  
hungry children are for knowledge.”

From: Posnick-Goodwin, S.  
“Schools Can’t Ignore Poverty,”  
*California Educator*, May 1999.

OVERHEAD



# All Homeless Children Share Two Things

1. They lack a  
permanent residence.
2. They live in  
extreme poverty.



# Who Is a Homeless Student?

- A school-age child who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; or
- A school-age child who has a primary nighttime residence that is any of the following:
  - a shelter
  - temporary institutional residence
  - makeshift arrangements in someone else's home
  - a place not designed for human accommodations

Adapted from the *McKinney-Vento Act*



# According to the McKinney-Vento Act

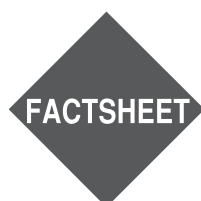
“The Education of Homeless Children and Youth program is to ensure that all homeless children and youth have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including preschool education, provided to other children and youth.”



# Rights

*Homeless children and youth have the following rights:*

- Free and appropriate public education
- Services comparable to those offered to non-homeless children and youth
- Choice to remain in their school of origin or transfer to a school in their current attendance area
- Enrollment in school despite the lack of a permanent address or the lack of school records
- Access to educationally related support services funded by district Title I funds
- Transportation to school and to school programs
- Advocacy from a school district liaison to ensure that rights are upheld



Copyright (c) 2001 WestEd. Permission to post on <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/homeless/curriculum.html> is granted by WestEd. Iowa teachers are encouraged to use these materials. No further permission to reproduce them should be inferred.

# Health and Well-Being

*Homeless children are more likely than other children to experience the following:*

- Suffer from chronic illnesses, live in unhealthy or unsafe environments, receive delayed treatment for injuries and illnesses, lack preventive and routine medical care, and experience chronic hunger.
- Develop serious emotional problems; experience somatic and stress disorders; and express intense fear and frustration through anger, self-blame, indifference, regression, and hopelessness.
- Live in chronic and extreme poverty, worry about their parents, witness and experience family violence, and enter the foster care system.
- Acquire developmental delays and learning disorders, not attend school, experience academic problems, repeat a grade, and be suspended for poor attendance and behavioral issues.

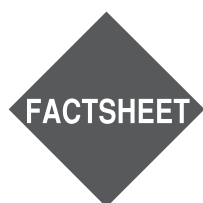


Copyright (c) 2001 WestEd. Permission to post on <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/homeless/curriculum.html> is granted by WestEd. Iowa teachers are encouraged to use these materials. No further permission to reproduce them should be inferred.

# How Homelessness Happens to Families

*Some reasons families become homeless:*

- Lack of affordable housing
- Eviction
- Fleeing domestic violence
- Experiencing a natural disaster
- Substance abuse
- Divorce
- Accidental death of parent
- Physical or mental illness
- Unemployment, underemployment, seasonal work



Copyright (c) 2001 WestEd. Permission to post on <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/homeless/curriculum.html> is granted by WestEd. Iowa teachers are encouraged to use these materials. No further permission to reproduce them should be inferred.



# How Homelessness Happens to Youth

*Some reasons youth become unattached to families and subsequently become homeless:*

- Resisting family rules
- Being gay or lesbian
- Being pregnant
- Fleeing family substance abuse
- Being thrown out of the family home
- Fleeing family sexual, physical, or mental abuse

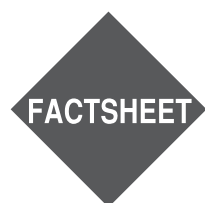


Copyright (c) 2001 WestEd. Permission to post on <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/homeless/curriculum.html> is granted by WestEd. Iowa teachers are encouraged to use these materials. No further permission to reproduce them should be inferred.

# Where Homeless Children Sleep

*Places where children may be forced to sleep because they lack a home:*

- Homeless shelters
- Domestic violence shelters
- Hotels and motels
- Under bridges or overpasses
- Churches
- Cars
- On the streets
- Transitional housing
- Campgrounds and parks
- “Doubled up” with friends or family
- Abandoned or dilapidated buildings



Copyright (c) 2001 WestEd. Permission to post on <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/homeless/curriculum.html> is granted by WestEd. Iowa teachers are encouraged to use these materials. No further permission to reproduce them should be inferred.

# Signs of Homelessness

*The following are signs that a child may be homeless:*

## Physical Signs

- Chronic hunger, hoarding of food
- Poor grooming and hygiene
- Fatigue and inability to concentrate
- Chronic health problems

## Emotional Signs

- Shame, low self-esteem
- Extreme shyness, nervousness, or withdrawal
- Anger, aggression
- Marked change in behavior to include any of the above
- Difficulty establishing relationships and building trust

*> over*



Copyright (c) 2001 WestEd. Permission to post on <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/homeless/curriculum.html> is granted by WestEd. Iowa teachers are encouraged to use these materials. No further permission to reproduce them should be inferred.

## Other Signs

- Lack of clean clothes and school supplies
- Frequent absence, tardiness, change of schools
- Consistently unprepared: no homework, books, papers requiring signature
- Talk about staying with grandparents, other relatives, friends, or in a motel
- Talk about taking care of parents or siblings

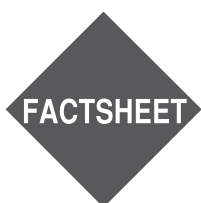
## Associated Risky Behaviors

- Involvement with drugs or alcohol
- Promiscuity

# Experiencing Homelessness

*Conditions homeless children are more likely than other children to experience:*

- Chronic illness
- Serious emotional problems
- Extreme and chronic poverty
- Difficulty trusting people
- Chaotic family lives
- No place to do homework
- Fear of abandonment, need to feel secure
- Difficulties adjusting to a new school
- Being teased or shunned by other students
- Feeling ashamed of where they live
- Moving again, soon
- No school records
- Developmental delays and learning disorders



Copyright (c) 2001 WestEd. Permission to post on <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/homeless/curriculum.html> is granted by WestEd. Iowa teachers are encouraged to use these materials. No further permission to reproduce them should be inferred.

# Things to Ask Yourself (and Others) If You Suspect a Child Is Homeless

- Is the child sent to school in the same outfit for more than two days?
- Does the child refrain from making reference to his/her bedroom at home?
- Does the child have a history of irregular school attendance?
- Does the child talk excessively about food?
- Has the child changed schools often in the last school year?
- Does the child consistently fail to complete homework?
- Does the child excessively fantasize about growing up, becoming rich, and/or helping others?
- Is the child familiar with age-inappropriate subjects?
- Has the child ever mentioned that parents use alcohol or other drugs?
- Has the child ever mentioned living with another family or in a motel or shelter?
- Does the child exhibit any unusual behavior?



Copyright (c) 2001 WestEd. Permission to post on <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/homeless/curriculum.html> is granted by WestEd. Iowa teachers are encouraged to use these materials. No further permission to reproduce them should be inferred.

# Questions for School Personnel

- How many children at your school reside in homeless family shelters, domestic violence shelters, hotels or motels, cars, local parks, or garages?
- What are the names of the shelters in your attendance area that send children to you? What are the names of the shelter directors?
- How can you assist a family to enroll in your school if they've lost the child's birth certificate or immunization records and don't remember the name of the child's last school?
- How does your school reach out to homeless parents to include them in school programs and services?
- What is the average length of stay at your school for children experiencing homelessness?
- How do you track homeless students when they leave your school?
- What kind of training do staff members receive about the special needs of homeless children?

TIPSHEET



Copyright (c) 2001 WestEd. Permission to post on <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/homeless/curriculum.html> is granted by WestEd. Iowa teachers are encouraged to use these materials. No further permission to reproduce them should be inferred.

# Message from a Homeless Child All Grown Up

Today, as an adult no one would ever guess that I was once a homeless child. I have a family of my own, a successful career, and I own my own home. They say I'm resilient and adaptive, but there is more to it than that. Let me share with you what homelessness felt like as a child, and some of the things that people — often teachers — did for me that made a tremendous difference in my life.

I never lived in a homeless shelter. We moved frequently. Some nights we slept in the back of a pickup truck, other nights in an abandoned house, and I lived most comfortably “doubled up” with other families. My longest stay was in a home with 14 people — two bedrooms and one bathroom. I slept in the living room by the front door, along with five other children. At least it was warm.

When life is so uncertain, you find yourself wanting to control anything you possibly can. This often can lead to outward aggression or withdrawal. I experienced both at different times. Chronic hunger can lead to hoarding food, because there may not be any food tomorrow, so you'd better grab what you can now. Separation from people you love and possessions is sometimes unbearable. I reached a point where the pain of leaving friends was just too much, so I decided making friends was a bad idea. It was so hard to change schools — especially in the middle of the year. In some places the teacher had someone show me around. In others I felt invisible. It wasn't easy showing up in ugly clothes that didn't fit, but at least they were clean (most of the time). I think I took fifth-grade health four times, but never learned any social studies that year, because each school I went to was teaching in a different order. I sure knew how my food was getting digested, but I didn't care. I just wanted to get something to eat.

When I think back about why I ended up where I am, and why other children sharing that same living room have not been so fortunate, I realize that I found anchors to hold on to. When I say anchors, I mean people who meant something to me, who said just the right things at the right time. These anchors were most often teachers.

Teachers can be so powerful in the eyes of a child, and don't even realize it. When life is so chaotic, teachers seem to be the only stable adults in your life you have to look up to. My mother meant well, but she had her hands full just trying to keep us fed. I had one teacher actually give me a picture of herself, a letter reminding me that I could be anything I wanted to be, and her address to write to her any time. I never wrote, but I carried her picture and her letter with me from place to place. I had other teachers just take a couple of minutes to talk with me about life — many of them expressed the importance of a good education, and that a strong education was my way out of poverty. They said I was smart, they said I was special, and they said I had the ability to do whatever I wanted to if I focused on it. I believed them. They gave me hope and they showed me that they cared, and that's what made the difference.

Their words were always with me. I knew drugs and alcohol were a dead end and education was the key. They were right. Thank you to all the teachers out there who truly care about their students. Although you may often feel unheard, your words are not falling on deaf ears.

Fondly,  
Adele Walker, MA



# Myths and Facts about Homelessness

**Myth 1: The homeless are primarily middle-aged or older men.**

**Fact:** Families with children are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population — over 750,000 school-age children and youth are homeless each night. Men, women, and children of all ages can be homeless.

**Myth 2: People are homeless by choice.**

**Fact:** Most people become homeless due to health, economic, or other personal crises.

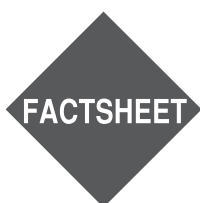
**Myth 3: People with jobs don't become homeless.**

**Fact:** For many of the working poor or minimum wage earners, their salaries are not enough to cover basic expenses including housing.

**Myth 4: Homelessness is an urban problem.**

**Fact:** People are homeless in all areas of the country — including small towns, suburbs, and rural areas.

*>over*



**Myth 5: Homeless people are cared for by their friends or family.**

Fact: Many homeless people do not have relatives or friends they can count on for help. When they do “double up,” the overcrowding can become burdensome.

**Myth 6: People become homeless because they drink, use drugs, or are mentally unstable.**

Fact: 26% are children under age 18, 11% are physically disabled, 21% are victims of domestic violence, 33% are veterans, and 34% are receiving mental health services.

**Myth 7: Homeless people are lazy and don’t want to work.**

Fact: Approximately 25% of homeless adults work.

**Myth 8: People on the streets don’t want help — there are plenty of homeless shelters and services.**

Fact: In most cities, there are far more people needing shelter and services than are currently accommodated.

**Myth 9: Government welfare policies prevent children from becoming homeless.**

Fact: Declining welfare benefits and housing assistance have contributed to record numbers of children experiencing homelessness.

# What Schools Can Do

**Problem:** Homework is difficult for children who don't have a quiet, proper place to study and work

**Solution:** Provide a place to study, materials, and homework help before and after school.

**Problem:** Hunger interferes with children paying attention, listening, studying, staying on task, and making friends.

**Solution:** Provide a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and snack for children, and have food available in classrooms to feed hungry children.

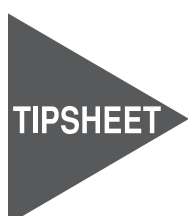
**Problem:** Children sleep in class due to inadequate nighttime sleeping arrangements.

**Solution:** Establish an appropriate place for children to rest. It is better for them to miss some instruction while sleeping than to experience school failure because they are unable to concentrate.

**Problem:** Children have trouble getting to school because transportation is limited or unavailable.

**Solution:** Provide special transportation to assist parents who cannot get their children to bus routes.

*>over*



Copyright (c) 2001 WestEd. Permission to post on <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/homeless/curriculum.html> is granted by WestEd. Iowa teachers are encouraged to use these materials. No further permission to reproduce them should be inferred.

**Problem:** Children miss school to care for siblings.

**Solution:** Arrange with other community agencies to provide appropriate child care.

**Problem:** The same clothes are worn repeatedly; they may be soiled, the wrong size, or for the wrong season.

**Solution:** Create a “clothes closet” for emergencies and arrange with community agencies to provide for appropriate clothing.

**Problem:** School supplies and extracurricular activities are too costly.

**Solution:** Provide supplies to facilitate children’s involvement in school activities and waive fees and provide transportation to enable children to participate in extracurricular activities.

**Problem:** Personal hygiene is inadequate.

**Solution:** Provide personal hygiene products and a place for students to bathe.

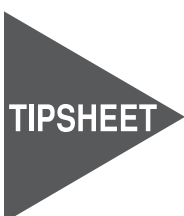
**Problem:** Medical and stress-related problems are unattended.

**Solution:** Make sure that students have access to school or community-based medical and mental health referrals and services.

# Planning an Awareness Campaign

## *Some ideas to get you started*

- Develop posters that raise awareness about homelessness and display them at schools, community buildings, local public libraries, grocery stores, or shopping centers.
- Have students develop greeting cards with awareness messages. Sell them and donate the proceeds to local homeless shelters or purchase backpacks, books, and school supplies for children.
- Develop a campaign to provide basic necessities to homeless families. Decorate containers and display them at schools, libraries, grocery stores, shopping centers, and local shops. Solicit the following types of items: food, clothing, backpacks, toiletries, books, school supplies, and anything else you think might be useful to families experiencing homelessness.
- Prepare information packets about homelessness and send them home with students.
- Develop public service announcements, produce newspaper advertisements, or partner with community groups that work with the homeless to develop a campaign that conveys accurate information and promotes supporting families without houses.



Copyright (c) 2001 WestEd. Permission to post on <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/homeless/curriculum.html> is granted by WestEd. Iowa teachers are encouraged to use these materials. No further permission to reproduce them should be inferred.

# Designing a Resource Brochure for Parents

**Audience:** School personnel

**Purpose:** Participants create a six-panel (two-sided) brochure to provide information to parents of homeless students about school and community programs and services.

**Preparation:**

1. Use the brochure template on page 31 or make one of your own.
2. Prepare a copy for each participant.
3. Prepare an overhead of the template.
4. Gather samples of type faces, clip art, or other graphics to use on the brochure.
5. Arrange for a class or small group of students to complete the desktop publishing of the brochure after your meeting.

**Equipment and Materials:**

Handouts  
Overhead projector  
Sample graphics

**Procedure:**

1. Individually or in small groups, have staff members add to and customize the basic information on the template:
  - What other examples can we add to panel 5?
  - What names and contact information do we want to include on panel 6?
  - What resources and contact information do we want to include on panels 2, 3, and 4?
2. Add ideas from participants to the overhead of the template.
3. As a group, finalize the brochure text.
4. Have participants decide on a general graphics treatment for the brochure.
5. Decide how many copies to make and how to disseminate them.

**Time:** Approximately 2-1/2 hours

**Follow-up:**

1. Carefully proofread and correct the brochure text.
2. The finalized brochure may need translation into multiple languages for parents.
3. Students who desktop publish the brochure will need about 3 hours to create an English-language layout, and additional time to lay out any translations and make copies.



<p><b>How to Help Your Child Succeed in School</b></p> <p><b>Examples...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Make sure your child attends school every day.</li> <li>■ Make education a family priority for your child.</li> <li>■ Spend a few minutes reading to your children every day.</li> <li>■ Your child can be encouraged by your interest in his or her school day, homework and papers and when you take time to ask questions or visit the school.</li> </ul> <p><i>(insert more examples)</i></p> <p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>Whom Do I Contact If I Have Questions or Need Support?</b></p> <p>District/School staff who work with homeless families:</p> <p><i>(insert names/numbers)</i></p> <p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>A Brochure for Families in Transition: What Parents Need to Know</b></p> <p><i>(insert names of your school and unified school district)</i></p> <p><b>1</b></p>
<p><b>Resources</b></p> <p><i>(list referral information about school, district, and community resources)</i></p> <p>Food Resources</p> <p>Health Clinics</p> <p>Health Information</p> <p>Child Care/Preschool Information</p> <p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <p>Housing</p> <p>Homeless shelters</p> <p>Domestic violence shelters</p> <p>Youth shelters</p> <p>Transitional units</p> <p>Department of Children and Family Services</p> <p>Child support</p> <p>Employment services</p> <p>24-hour hotlines</p> <p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <p><i>(insert other resources homeless families should know about)</i></p> <p><b>4</b></p>

# Over 930,000 School-Age Children and Youth Are Homeless Every Night

**Audience:** School personnel; may also include parents and community members

**Purpose:** Participants become more aware of how many homeless children and youth there are, especially in the local community.

## **Preparation:**

1. Contact your state McKinney-Vento Act Coordinator or a local shelter to get help with the facts of homelessness in your state and community.
2. Contact your district liaison for the facts about homeless students in your district and school.
3. Make a copy of the handout on page 33 for each participant.
4. Make an overhead or large version of the handout.

## **Equipment and Materials:**

Handouts

Overhead projector, transparency and marker; or large writing surface the whole group can see, marker or chalk

## **Procedure:**

1. Have participants each fill in their handouts with their best guesses.
2. On the overhead or large version of the handout, fill in the facts.

**Time:** Approximately 10 minutes





# Over 930,000 School-Age Children and Youth Are Homeless Every Night

How many are in your...	Guess	Fact
State		
County		
City		
School District		
School		

# Where Do the Children Sleep?

**Audience:** School personnel; may also include parents and community members

**Purpose:** Participants will increase their awareness of what it means for the homeless students in their school to have to sleep in a variety of places other than their own homes.

**Preparation:** Make a copy of the handout on page 35 for each participant.

**Equipment or Materials:** Handouts

**Procedure:**

1. Ask participants to consider each question in the box at the top of the handout.
2. After a minute or two, facilitate a discussion about the three questions on the bottom half of the handout.

**Time:** Approximately 5 minutes



Copyright (c) 2001 WestEd. Permission to post on <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/homeless/curriculum.html> is granted by WestEd. Iowa teachers are encouraged to use these materials. No further permission to reproduce them should be inferred.

# Where Do the Children Sleep?

At a homeless shelter?	Yes	No	Don't Know
At a domestic violence shelter?	Yes	No	Don't Know
At a motel or hotel?	Yes	No	Don't Know
In a car?	Yes	No	Don't Know
At a campground?	Yes	No	Don't Know
At a local park?	Yes	No	Don't Know
In an abandoned building?	Yes	No	Don't Know
"Doubled up" with friends or family?	Yes	No	Don't Know

## **Ask yourself:**

1. Are these safe places for children?
2. Are these places conducive to doing homework?
3. Do these places allow for easy access to school and other services?

# How Does It Feel to Be Homeless?

**Audience:** School personnel; may also include parents and community members

**Purpose:** Participants will try to think about how it feels to be homeless from the perspective of a child.

**Preparation:** Make a copy of the handout on page 37 for each participant.

**Equipment or Materials:** Handouts

**Procedure:**

1. Read aloud the two passages.
2. Ask participants to think about the passages and to write down a few words or phrases that reflect their thoughts or feelings.
3. Facilitate a discussion about the thoughts and feelings the passages evoked for participants.

**Time:** Approximately 30 minutes



Copyright (c) 2001 WestEd. Permission to post on <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/homeless/curriculum.html> is granted by WestEd. Iowa teachers are encouraged to use these materials. No further permission to reproduce them should be inferred.

# How Does It Feel to Be Homeless?

*"People in school call me a hotel kid.... They have no right to punish me for something I have no control over. I'm just a little boy, living in a hotel, petrified, wanting to know what's going to happen to me. I am not a hotel kid. I am a child who lives in a hotel."*

— 12-year-old boy

From: *The New York Times*, September 30, 1990



## **Cardboard Boxes**

"Homeless people live in cardboard boxes,  
don't they?"

That's what some kid said to me today.  
Then he laughed.

I wanted to hit him.  
But I didn't...I laughed too.

Then,  
I went back to the shelter and ~~died~~ cried.

— Jamie, age 13

# What Do You Know about Homelessness?

**Audience:** School personnel; may also include parents and community members

**Purpose:** Participants will confront some stereotypes about homelessness and increase their awareness of facts about homeless families.

**Preparation:** Make a copy of the handout on page 40 for each participant.

**Equipment or Materials:** Handouts

**Procedure:**

1. Have each person answer complete the 10-question true-false quiz.
2. When everyone is finished, provide the answers from the answer key on page 39.
3. Invite participants to reflect on what they learned from the quiz.

**Time:** Approximately 15 minutes



Copyright (c) 2001 WestEd. Permission to post on <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/homeless/curriculum.html> is granted by WestEd. Iowa teachers are encouraged to use these materials. No further permission to reproduce them should be inferred.

# What Do You Know about Homelessness?

## *Answer Key*

<b>T or F</b>	1. Families with children are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population.
<b>T or F</b>	2. Homeless people are typically single men. <b>False:</b> Nationally, homeless families make up almost as large a percentage of the homeless (40%) as men do (45%) .
<b>T or F</b>	3. Homeless children do not have the same rights to a public education as children with permanent addresses. <b>False:</b> Homeless children have the same rights as housed children, including transportation.
<b>T or F</b>	4. There is nothing that teachers can do to help their students who experience homelessness. <b>False:</b> Often a teacher can provide much-needed structure, support, and stability in the lives of homeless children and, with training, can provide a rich and challenging learning environment for them.
<b>T or F</b>	5. Families are homeless because they are lazy. <b>False:</b> About 25% of the homeless work for wages; and an enormous amount of physical and mental stamina is required to negotiate the chaos and fear associated with transiency.
<b>T or F</b>	6. Homeless shelters do not provide adequate space and support for children to complete their homework.
<b>T or F</b>	7. Parents of homeless children do not care about their children's education. <b>False:</b> Parents do care. They are often so overwhelmed with finding work, food, and shelter for their children that education loses its priority due to the lack of basic necessities.
<b>T or F</b>	8. Homeless families are aware of the resources available to them. <b>False:</b> Homeless parents often do not know about all the services available to them. They are often unaware of their children's rights to education as well.
<b>T or F</b>	9. Transportation is often a major hurdle for homeless families.
<b>T or F</b>	10. Parents have a right to keep their children in their original school or move them into a nearby school.

# What Do You Know about Homelessness?

T or F	1. Families with children are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population.
T or F	2. Homeless people are typically single men.
T or F	3. Homeless children do not have the same rights to a public education as children with permanent addresses.
T or F	4. There is nothing that teachers can do to help their students who experience homelessness.
T or F	5. Families are homeless because they are lazy.
T or F	6. Homeless shelters do not provide adequate space and support for children to complete their homework.
T or F	7. Parents of homeless children do not care about their children's education.
T or F	8. Homeless families are aware of the resources available to them.
T or F	9. Transportation is often a major hurdle for homeless families.
T or F	10. Parents have a right to keep their children in their original school or move them into a nearby school.



# How Can We Support Homeless Children?

**Audience:** School personnel, parents, and community members

**Purpose:** Participants will think about how different members of the school, community, and family can support children experiencing homelessness.

## **Preparation:**

1. Decide whether your group needs Worksheet A or B, on pages 42 and 43. (Use B if you want to customize the role types for your participants or to have participants suggest role types).
2. Make copies of Worksheet A or B for all participants.

## **Equipment and Materials:**

Worksheets

Large writing surface the whole group can see, marker or chalk

## **Procedure:**

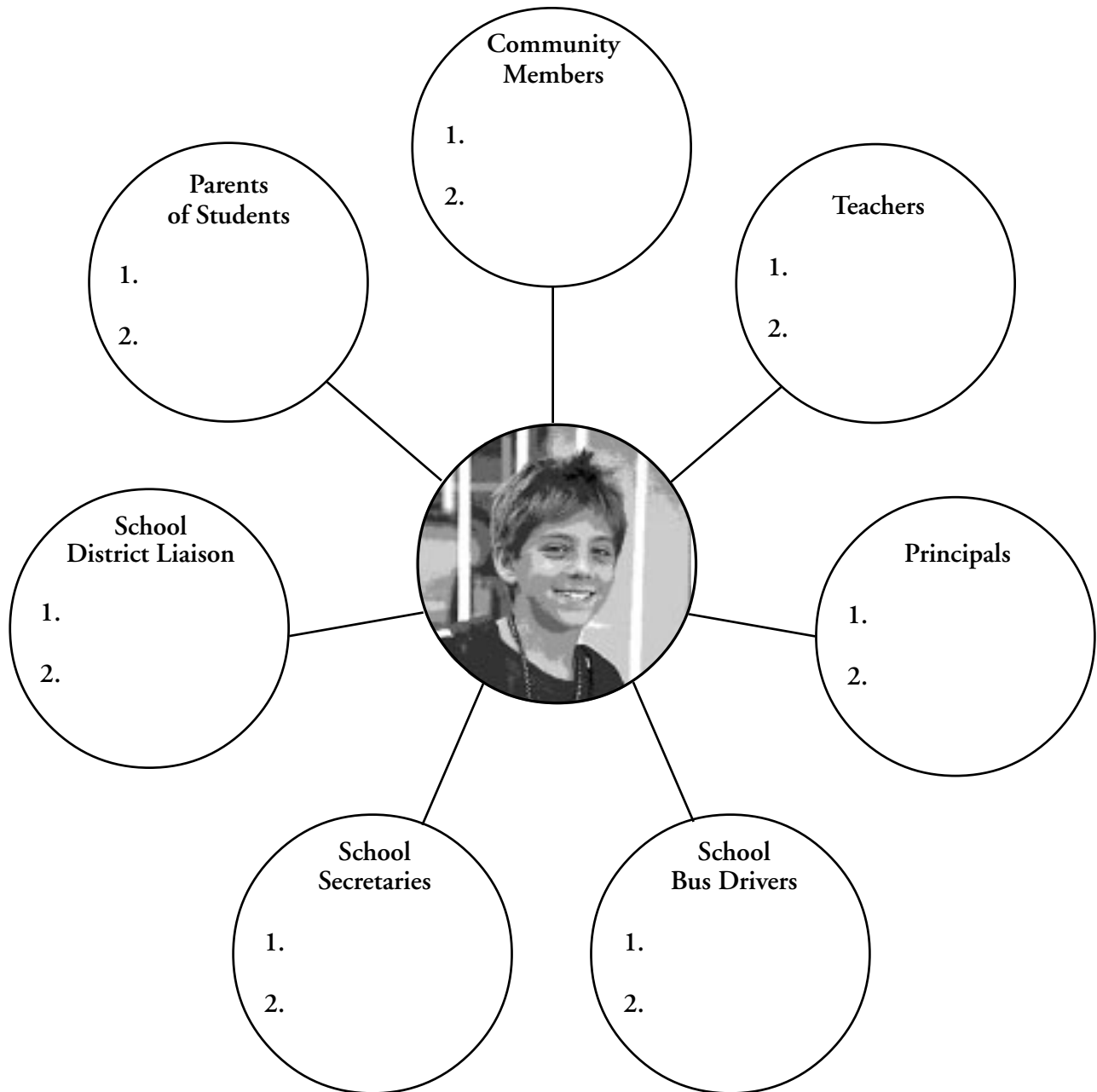
1. Go over the worksheet with the group, having them fill in the role types if necessary.
2. Have participants work individually or in pairs to write down at least two things people in each role can do to improve the health, well-being, and academic success of homeless students.
3. Facilitate a discussion about participants' responses and generate a group list of ways homeless students can be supported.



Copyright (c) 2001 WestEd. Permission to post on <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/homeless/curriculum.html> is granted by WestEd. Iowa teachers are encouraged to use these materials. No further permission to reproduce them should be inferred.

# How Can We Support Homeless Children?

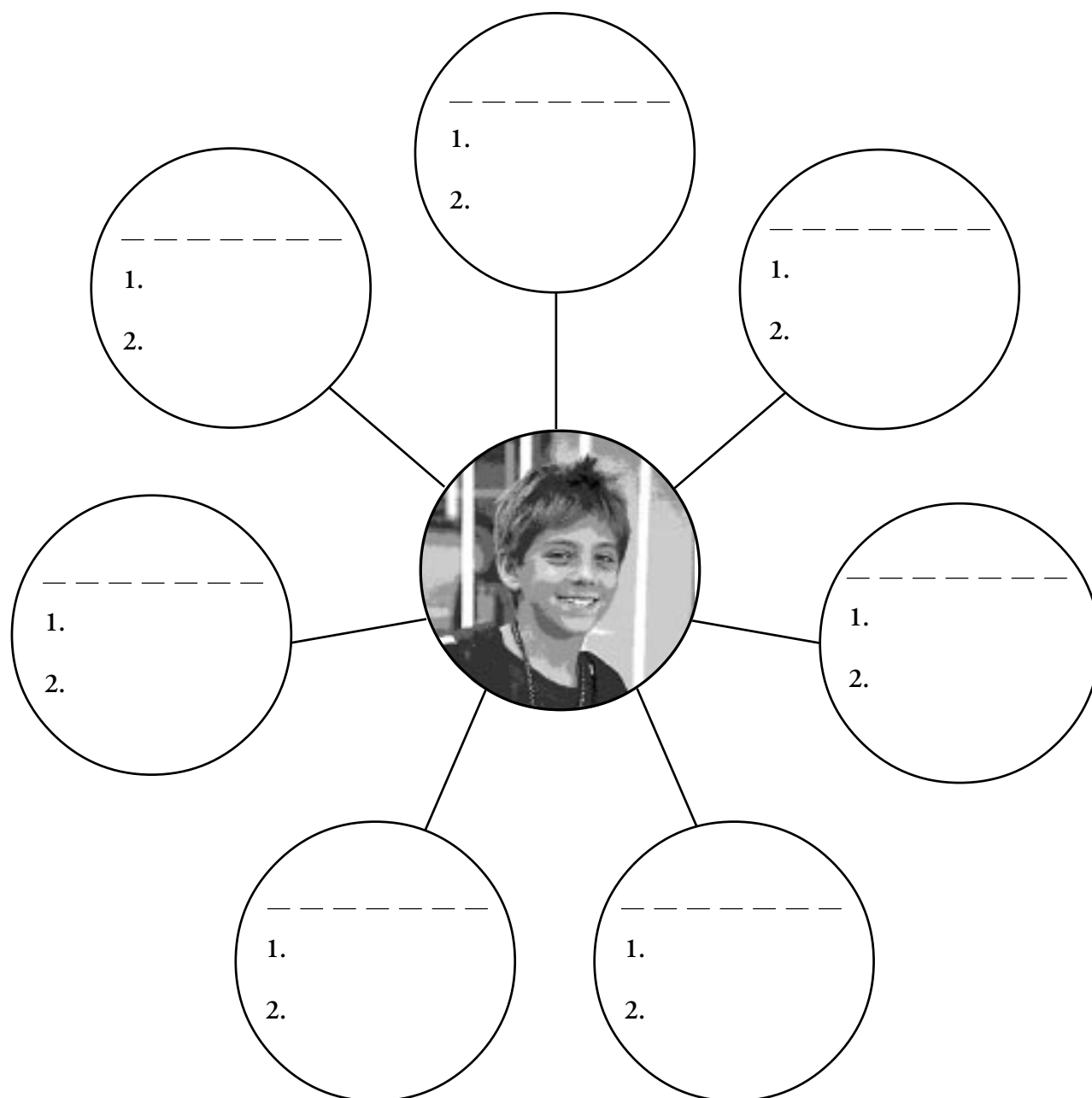
*What can people in each role group do to improve the health, well-being, and academic success of homeless students?*



## Worksheet A

# How Can We Support Homeless Children?

*What can people in each role group do to improve the health, well-being, and academic success of homeless students?*



## Worksheet B

# Planning a Visit to a Homeless Shelter

**Audience:** School personnel

**Purpose:** Planning for the visit will sensitize participants to the ways they can best carry out their visit. The visit itself should increase participants' understanding of shelter life and the challenges families experiencing homelessness face.

## **Preparation:**

1. Prepare a list of shelter(s) that send children to your school and add it to the worksheet on page 45.
2. Invite a small group to help you plan the visit.
3. Make a copy of the worksheet for each member of your planning group.

**Equipment or Materials:** Worksheets

## **Procedure:**

1. Explain that in planning a visit to a shelter, the group will want to incorporate a way to make a meaningful contribution while there, perhaps by helping in the kitchen, bringing donations, reading to children, or talking with parents.
2. Review the To Do List on the worksheet with the group.
3. Together discuss what will be involved in each step.
4. Allocate responsibilities.
5. Set deadlines.

**Time:** Approximately 2 hours for the initial planning



Copyright (c) 2001 WestEd. Permission to post on <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/homeless/curriculum.html> is granted by WestEd. Iowa teachers are encouraged to use these materials. No further permission to reproduce them should be inferred.

# Planning a Visit to a Homeless Shelter

Shelter(s) where our students stay:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

To Do List	Person in Charge	Deadline
<p>Contact a shelter director regarding your group's desire to visit.</p> <p><i>Explain to the shelter director:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ We have children attending our school who stay in your shelter.</li> <li>✓ We would like to gain a better understanding of what these children and youth need so that we may better serve them.</li> <li>✓ We would like to develop a system to better serve homeless children and youth from your shelter.</li> <li>✓ We are eager to learn.</li> </ul> <p><i>Ask the shelter director:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ How can we best help at the shelter, while gaining an understanding of how to serve our children and youth experiencing homelessness?</li> <li>✓ May we arrange to talk with parents about their needs?</li> <li>✓ How would you like us to visit (small groups of a specific number over time, several groups at one time)?</li> </ul>		
Develop and send invitations.		
Post sign-up sheets for people who want to volunteer at the shelter.		
Arrange for a donation of books, food, or clothing to be delivered during the visit.		
Arrange for transportation.		
Arrange for a follow-up debriefing about the visit, focused on what participants learned about the lives of families who live in shelters.		
Schedule your next meeting or check-in.		
What else?		

Copyright (c) 2001 WestEd. Permission to post on <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/homeless/curriculum.html> is granted by WestEd. Iowa teachers are encouraged to use these materials. No further permission to reproduce them should be inferred.